

the economy. It would make significant debt reduction and tax relief much more difficult.

My budget plan doesn't slam the brake on spending; it slows the growth of spending. It makes our increases in spending more realistic and reasonable. All in all, my budget will provide the Government with 100 billion more to spend in 2002. Even by Washington standards, this is a lot of additional money, and it is enough.

This debate illustrates a point I've been making for a while: When money is left in Washington, there is a tremendous temptation for the Government to use it. The point is simple: If you send it, they will spend it. And this is why we need a balanced approach of moderate spending growth, debt reduction, and meaningful tax relief.

This is the plan the Congress is now considering, and I hope you'll give it your support.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:22 p.m. on March 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Exchange With Reporters in Kansas City, Missouri

March 26, 2001

National Economy

Q. Are we in the middle of an economic downturn?

The President. We'll let the numbers speak for themselves. I'm concerned about our economy. I'm confident, however, if we do the right things, we can have economic growth, the likes of which we've had in the past. We'll watch the numbers carefully. The numbers will speak the truth.

The last quarter of last year was a very slow-growth quarter, and we'll see how it is in the first quarter of this year. I think a lot of experts believe that it's going to be slow.

Q. Do you believe in Ari's formulation, that we're in the middle of an economic downturn?

The President. Pardon me?

Q. Do you agree with your spokesman's formulation, that we're in the middle of a downturn?

The President. It has slowed down, and we better do something about it. And that's one of the reasons I'm here in Kansas City, to talk about tax relief as part of an economic stimulus package. And by the way, you looked very sharp the other night. Where did you rent it? [Laughter]

Airline Strikes

Q. Mr. President, are you going to intervene in the Comair strike?

The President. The National Mediation Board did not make—did not rule. In other words, they did not give me the right to move in on the strike, therefore, the parties are going to have to settle it themselves.

Q. Are you still determined to prevent a season of airline strikes, sir?

The President. I am worried about what the airline shutdowns could do to the economy. I would urge that all parties come to quick resolution on the matters that—you know, on the table. Yes, I'm concerned about what airline strikes could do.

Q. But your hands are tied in this case?

The President. In this case they are, as you know.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:49 a.m. at the First Watch Restaurant. A reporter referred to Press Secretary Ari Fleischer. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to Employees of Bajan Industries in Kansas City

March 26, 2001

Elson, thank you very much for your hospitality. It was interesting, you said the name of this company is a reflection of his heritage, and that's true. But this company is also a reflection of the American Dream, as well. And I'm so thankful for the invitation to be here. I'm also thankful for your willingness to dream and to create jobs. This is what America is all about. This is what I call the lifeblood of the country.